Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally

2015 Marketing Outlook Forum - Outlook for 2016

2016 Industry Outlook: Top 5 Food & Drink Tourism Expectations

World Food Travel Association

2016 INDUSTRY OUTLOOK: TOP 5 FOOD & DRINK TOURISM EXPECTATIONS

Published October 2015

help@worldfoodtravel.org
(+1) 503-213-3700

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD & DRINK TRAVELERS

- Biggest market opportunity: Millennials & GenX
- Age: Younger (22+) to middle age (<50)
- Gender: Slightly (but not significantly) more female
- Education: More years of education
- Income: Not significantly wealthier
- Food/drink remain in the top 3 of visitor experiences
- 100% of travelers eat and drink

FOOD & DRINK TOURISM EXPECTATION #1 FOR 2016

Interest in authenticity & food culture will remain high.

This means people seeking hands-on experiences, asking lots of questions, searching answers to questions during the experience (using smartphones), and documenting food and drink experiences in social media. This is also leading to the phenomenon where not just bloggers, but now consumers, are emerging as credible food-/photo- journalists.

Smart destination marketers are enabling consumers to become foodie journalists with innovative use of technology tools.

FOOD & DRINK TOURISM EXPECTATION #2 FOR 2016

Interest in gourmet experiences should remain modest.

A common misunderstanding about food and drink tourism is that it is synonymous with gourmet tourism. From past research, we learned that people whose primary interest in gourmet experiences is only 8.1% of the market. We continue to see more consumer interest in simply great food and drink experiences, especially authentic and top 10/must do experiences.

New research for 2016 is expected to show that interest in higher-end gourmet experiences is stagnant or falling.

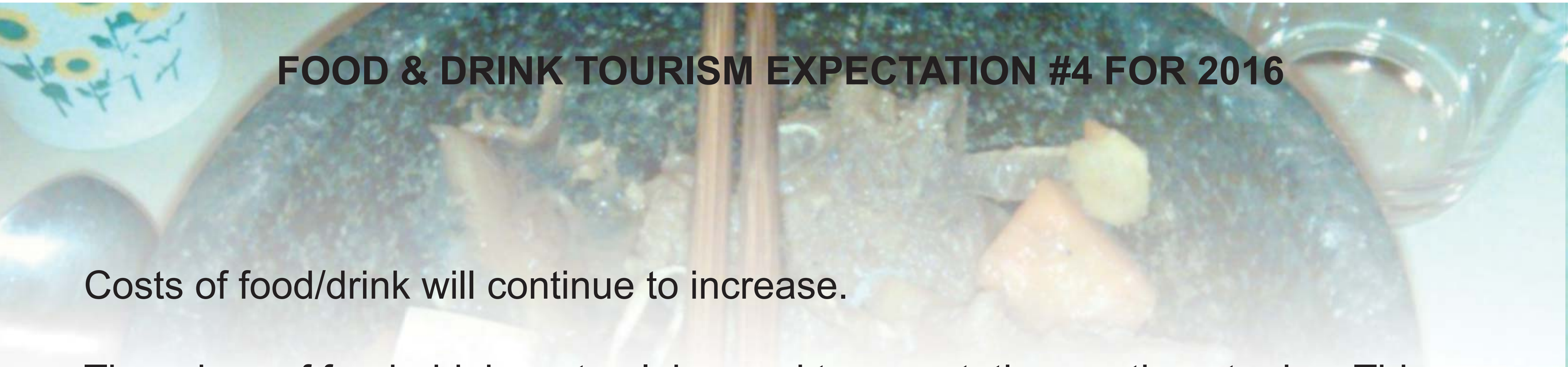
FOOD & DRINK TOURISM EXPECTATION #3 FOR 2016

Consumers will seek increased diversity of food/drink experiences.

While interest in restaurants, wineries and breweries remains high, consumers are increasingly broadening the food and drink experiences they seek.

Examples include distilled spirits tastings and tours, urban walking food tours, tea/coffee tastings and plantation tours, cooking classes and visits to stores selling specialty food and drink.

Smart destinations are focusing on a wide variety of food/drink experiences. Case in point is Ashville, North Carolina’s Foodtopia.com website.



FOOD & DRINK TOURISM EXPECTATION #4 FOR 2016

Costs of food/drink will continue to increase.

The prices of food, drink, water, labor and transportation continue to rise. This adds to the overall cost of the food or drink experience for visitors. Because of increased costs, more and more consumers seek affordable experiences like food carts/trucks, meals from grocery stores, tasting/sampling menus and small plates, happy hour dining, and lodging with kitchenettes where they can do their own cooking.

Smart destinations are enabling discovery of more affordable and alternative food and drink experiences.

FOOD & DRINK TOURISM EXPECTATION #5 FOR 2016

Consumers taking behaviors – and expectations on the road with them.

Questions about local sourcing, ingredient allergies and food preferences and excessive product packaging are becoming more commonplace further from home.

In turn, servers and restaurant owners are becoming more aware and knowledgeable and chefs are becoming more accommodating.

4110 SE Hawthorne Boulevard Suite 440

Portland, Oregon 97214 USA

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